MITCH Charter School

Code: GBC-AR
Revised/Reviewed: 7/20/23

Staff Ethics

Public charter school employees are allowed financial benefits as identified in Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 244.040(2), such as their official compensation package, reimbursed expenses, limited honoraria and unsolicited awards for professional achievement. Public charter school employees are prohibited from using or attempting to use their position to obtain a financial gain or to avoid a financial detriment for the public charter school employee, a relative or member of the household of the employee, or any business with which the employee or a relative or member of the household of the employee is associated, if the opportunity for financial gain or avoidance of a financial detriment would not otherwise be available but for the employee's position with the public charter school. Specifically, this means that:

1. Employees will not use public charter school equipment for personal use, unless it is available to a significant segment of the general public. This includes, but is not limited to, the personal use of the public charter school's:

   a. Fax machine[1];
   b. Phones to make long distance personal calls;
   c. Public charter school vehicles;
   d. Professional technology equipment (e.g., wood shop, automotive shop, CAD); and
   e. Athletic facilities (e.g., pool or weight room).

   Further, the public charter school's supplies, facilities, equipment, employees, records or any other public resources are not to be used to engage in private business interests. For example, the public charter school's computer cannot be used to sell products on an auction website during school hours.

2. When employees are traveling on official public charter school business, any gift given because of this travel must be either declined or passed on to the public charter school for use for future public charter school travel. For example, if the hotel where the employee is staying gives the employee a free night's stay on a future visit, this must be declined or given back to the public charter school for future public charter school travel. The frequent flyer miles earned when traveling on official public charter school business can only be used for public charter school travel. If the employee's spouse is traveling with the employee, the employee is responsible for all additional charges (i.e., additional room charge).

3. Employees may not use personal credit cards for public charter school travel or other public charter school business and receive incentives such as cash reimbursements, frequent flyer miles and other benefits based upon the dollar amount of purchases made.

[1] The public charter school could establish a fee schedule that would allow only public charter school employees to pay for the personal use of the public charter school fax machines. If the public charter school established a fee schedule for the use of fax machines the fee schedule must be equal to or exceed the prevailing rates offered at commercial businesses.

4. Employees may not use discounts offered by private companies for the employee's personal benefit if the discount is only offered because of the employee's official position. For example, an office supplies store provides all teachers a 10 percent discount. Because the teachers are receiving this discount only because of their official position, they cannot use the discount to purchase personal items. Teachers may use the discount to purchase items for public charter school use. Employees can also accept the discount if it is also available to a substantial segment of the population who are not public officials.

5. Employees may accept free passes to public charter school extracurricular events if they are attending these events in their official capacity (i.e., chaperoning, ticket sales or managing concession sales). In order to promote employee participation in extracurricular activities, the public charter school may include free passes in employees' official compensation packages or employees may be reimbursed by the public charter school for the cost of admission.

6. The employee's public charter school position is not to be used to take official action that could have a financial impact on a private business with which the employee, a relative or member of the employee's household are associated. For example, if the employee's sibling owns a pest-control business which is seeking a contract with the public charter school, and the employee is part of the decision-making process, the employee must declare an actual conflict of interest, in writing, describing the nature of the conflict, and provide this to the employee's supervisor.

7. Confidential information gained as a public charter school employee is not to be used to obtain a financial benefit for the employee, a relative or member of the employee's household or a business with which any are associated. For example, the employee should not use the information that a student in their class is falling behind in math to provide the parents a referral to the employee's sibling's tutoring business.

8. Public charter school employees who mentor student teachers may not receive direct payments from sponsoring colleges or universities. The payment may be provided by the college or university to the public charter school, which can then distribute the compensation to the teachers as an element of their official compensation package.

9. Public charter school employees must follow Oregon Government Ethics Commission guidelines for outside employment if the employee acts as a chaperone for student group trips on personal time and the public charter school employee accepts compensation in the form of travel expenses from a private business or organization. Specifically, public charter school employees must conduct all activities related to the trip on personal time and cannot use the classroom or school environment to plan the off-campus trip. Employees may use public charter school facilities for this purpose only if they comply with the public charter school's public use of facilities policy. It is not an ethics violation for the employee to accept reasonable expenses for accompanying students on an education trip.

   These restrictions do not apply if the teacher is chaperoning students on a fact-finding mission that is officially sanctioned by the Board.